

WORKSHEETS
On
« DRACULA »
by Bram Stoker
prepared by Lucille O'Flanagan

COMPREHENSION TWO
THE RENFIELD & SEWARD TEXT

DR SEWARD'S PRIVATE ASYLUM (FROM CHAPTER 20)

DR SEWARD enters to find RENFIELD sitting on the floor, in intense thoughts. RENFIELD looks up, as if he's been waiting to ask:

RENFIELD What about souls?

DR SEWARD What about them yourself?

RENFIELD *(looks up and down and around for an answer)* I don't want any souls!

DR SEWARD But you want life, and you like life?

RENFIELD Oh yes! But that is all right; you needn't worry about that.

DR SEWARD But how are we to get the life without getting the souls also? A nice time you'll have of it, with the souls of thousands of flies and spiders and birds and cats buzzing and twittering and miaowing all around you.

RENFIELD Stop it. Stop it!

DR SEWARD *(relentless)*

You've got their lives, you know, and you must put up with their souls!

RENFIELD puts his fingers in his ears and screws his eyes up tightly, rocking and screaming. DR SEWARD falls silent, watching and making notes. After a while, Renfield calms down and looks at DR SEWARD.

DR SEWARD (CONT'D) Would you like some sugar to get your flies round again?

RENFIELD Not much! Flies are poor things, after all. But I don't want their souls buzzing round me, all the same. Beat

DR SEWARD Or spiders?

RENFIELD Blow spiders! What's the use of spiders! There isn't anything in them to eat, or, or, or...

DR SEWARD I see. You want big things that you can make your teeth meet in? How would you like to breakfast on an elephant?

RENFIELD What ridiculous nonsense you are talking!

DR SEWARD I wonder what an elephant's soul is like?

RENFIELD I don't want an elephant's soul, or any soul at all! To hell with you and your souls! Why do you plague me about souls? Haven't I got enough to worry, and pain, and distract me already, without thinking of souls? (Beat) Forgive me Doctor, I forgot myself. I am so worried in my mind that I am apt to be irritable.

QUESTIONS

- 1) In this scene who is the doctor and who is the patient ?
- 2) Where are they ?
- 3) From the text here, what does Renfield not want buzzing around him, and why ?
- 4) What is it Renfield wants from the flies ? What does he do to the flies, in your opinion ?
- 5) This is text adapted for actors from the original book, tell me what does it mean when the writer of a play puts words in a bracket, eg (relentless) ?

With your general knowledge of the book and this period of history, and using approximately 100 words for your answers, reply to the following statements :

- (A) « Dr Seward is like that doctor in The Elephant Man, he is only out for his own career »
- (B) « Renfield is only hurting himself, they should let him out »

ACTIVITY

Act out this short scene in groups of 3. One to play Renfield, one to play Seward and one to read the stage directions.

NB (CONT'D) is an abbreviation for Continued.

« make your teeth meet in » is the doctor describing literally the action of biting through meat. He seems to think Renfield is hungry in the normal way, this is of course not the case and Renfield replies to this.